

USS WILHOITE (DER-397)

FLEET POST OFFICE
SAN FRANCISCO 96601

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From: Commanding Officer, USS WILHOITE (DER-397)

To: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: Command History for 1967; submission of

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12 of 8 November 1966

Encl: (1) USS WILHOITE (DER-397) Command History for 1967
(Report Symbol: OPNAV Report 5750-1)

1. In accordance with reference (a), enclosure (1) is hereby submitted.


D. H. GRIFFIN

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USS WILHOITE (DER-397) Command History For 1967

I. Chronology of Highlights:

10 February-28 March	Restricted Availability in Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard
1-12 May	Refresher Training
29 May	Commenced WESTPAC deployment
19 June	Commenced Market Time Patrol off the coast of South Vietnam
11 July	Commenced surveillance of suspicious trawler suspected of infiltration attempt
15 July	Participated in the capture of North Vietnamese re-supply trawler attempting infiltration into South Vietnam
29 July-11 August	Station Ship Hong Kong-CTU 70.2.0
1-28 September	Taiwan Patrol-CTG 72.1
1-23 October	Market Time Patrol
27 October-17 November	Station Ship Hong Kong-CTU 70.2.0
28 November-26 December	Taiwan Patrol-CTG 72.1
31 December	Change of Command

II. Narrative

A. Command Organization

1. Commanding Officers: 1 January-30 December CDR E. W. HAYS
31 December-present LCDR D. H. GRIFFIN
2. Homeport : Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
3. Mission : To carry out ocean surveillance; to detect air, surface, and submarine activity; to counter sea infiltration efforts; and to operate offensively against submarines.
4. Complement on 31 December: Officers - 13
Enlisted - 147

...ed, through the ... WILHOITE ...

WILHOITE departed her home port on 29 May 1967 for an extended deployment to the Western Pacific.

Following an uneventful two week westward voyage, broken only by an eight hour fuel stop in Guam, WILHOITE arrived in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, for four days of final preparation for her first patrol in the combat zone.

WILHOITE departed Subic Bay on 17 June and set a course for Vietnam, arriving about two days later off the South Vietnamese Coast near Chu Lai, where she relieved the USS KRETCHMER and assumed duties as a unit of operation Market Time. Her mission: to prevent the infiltration of ammunition and supplies to the Viet Cong by sea.

The days went quickly on Market Time, as the crew kept busy with watches, replenishment-at-sea evolutions, and rendezvous with other Market Time units. WILHOITE acted as "Mother Ship" for two Navy swift boats, berthing extra crews on board and supplying them with fuel, food, and water.

At approximately 2000 on 11 July a Market Time patrol aircraft detected a darkened steel hull trawler fifty-five miles from the South Vietnamese coast, on a westerly heading which would soon put it in WILHOITE'S patrol area. The aircraft notified WILHOITE by radio and WILHOITE commenced closing the trawler for investigation. Upon gaining radar contact with the trawler WILHOITE commenced covert surveillance, remaining out of visual range throughout the night. The next morning WILHOITE closed the trawler for identification purposes, then opened out beyond visual range again.

By this time the trawler had changed course and was headed away from the coast. WILHOITE maintained surveillance for three days, until finally the trawler turned and again headed for the coast. When the trawler entered the Market Time area WILHOITE was joined by three other Market Time units under the overall command of Commander C. R. STEPHAN, USN, who embarked aboard

WILHOITE. WILHOITE and the other units—USS GALLUP (PGM 85), USCGC POINT ORIENT (WPG 82319) and PCF 79—intercepted the trawler as it reached a point five miles from the beach. Ignoring calls to surrender broadcast by a psychological warfare unit embarked in POINT ORIENT, the trawler was taken under fire and ran aground in flames on a sandbar at the mouth of the River De Sa Ky in Quang Ngai Province. Intermittent fire was directed at the trawler throughout the night and in the morning a boarding party went aboard to assess damage and inspect the trawler's cargo. It's holds were jammed with guns, ammunition and explosives—the largest arms cache captured in the Vietnam War. As a result of this action the following decorations were awarded WILHOITE personnel:

(b) (6)



WILHOITE was relieved on 26 July and proceeded to the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong for two weeks duty as Station Ship. In this new assignment WILHOITE carried out all the administrative duties of a small naval station, making berthing arrangements with the Royal Navy for U.S. Navy ships and supplying mail, movies, and numerous other services to units of the SEVENTH Fleet visiting this exotic port for R & R.

On 12 August WILHOITE was underway for Sasebo, Japan, where she was to undergo a thirteen day upkeep period. WILHOITE accomplished a great deal of work in Sasebo, receiving repair assistance from the Ship Repair Department of the local shipyard as well as the repair ship USS KLONDIKE. The industriousness and enthusiasm of the Japanese shipyard workers greatly impressed everyone. They swarmed over the ship and accomplished a number of important jobs.

7. Community Relations Activities

a. At the conclusion of WILHOITE's restricted availability in the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard in March an open house was held for the shipyard workers and their families.

b. During two assignments as Station Ship Hong Kong sixty-eight blood donations were given to the British Red Cross by WILHOITE personnel.

c. In Hong Kong a party was given aboard WILHOITE for thirty Chinese children.

d. While assigned to Market Time in October eleven WILHOITE crewmen participated in the clean-up and sanitization of a civilian hospital in Qui Nhon, South Vietnam.

8. Awards, commendations and congratulatory messages received_____

See Annex D

III. Lessons Learned, Conclusions, or Recommendations - None

IV. Documentary Annexes

A. Photograph of captured North Vietnamese re-supply trawler.

B. Cruise Book - WILHOITE's 1967 cruise book has not yet been published; a copy will be forwarded when the books are received.

C. Rosters of crew and officers.

D. Congratulatory messages.

E. Public affairs press releases.

F. Communications report.

G. WILHOITE "Familygram"